Days with Sir Roger de Coverley

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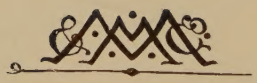
Sabina Bacheler Frye —

Christmas, 1894 —

From

Days
with
Roger de Coverley.
The
Spectator



Dancing
SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY.

DAYS

WITH

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY

A REPRINT FROM

"THE SPECTATOR"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

HUGH THOMSON

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Sir Roger's Family.

LEAVING often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing Speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table or in my

chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shews me at a distance: As I have been walking in his

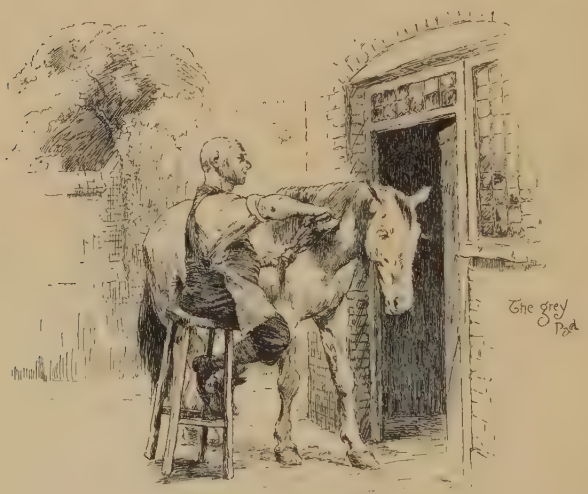
"I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge."

fields I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the Knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir ROGER'S family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the Knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him; by this means his domesticks are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his valet de chambre for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-counsellor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, tho' he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great

deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenance of these ancient domesticks upon my friend's arrival at his



country-seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them press'd forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old Knight,

with the mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the enquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good-nature engages every body to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with: On the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir ROGER is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man who is ever with Sir ROGER, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation: He heartily loves Sir ROGER, and knows that he is very much in the old Knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir ROGER, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humorist; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly *his*, and distinguishes them

Sir Roger arrives at the House.

from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned? and without staying for my answer told

me, That he was afraid of being insulted with *Latin* and *Greek* at his own table; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the University to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of back-gammon. My friend, says Sir Roger, found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, tho' he does not shew it: I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years; and tho' he does not know I have taken notice of

it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, tho' he is every day soliciting me for some thing in behalf of one or other of my tenants his parish-

The Village Court of Assize.

ioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has liv'd among them: If any dispute arises they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first

settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in *English*, and only begg'd of him that every *Sunday* he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity.

As Sir ROGER was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the Knight's asking him who preached to morrow (for it was *Saturday* night) told us, the Bishop of St. *Asaph* in the morning, and Dr. *South* in the afternoon. He then shewed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop *Tillotson*, Bishop *Saunderson*, Dr. *Barrow*, Dr. *Calamy*, with several

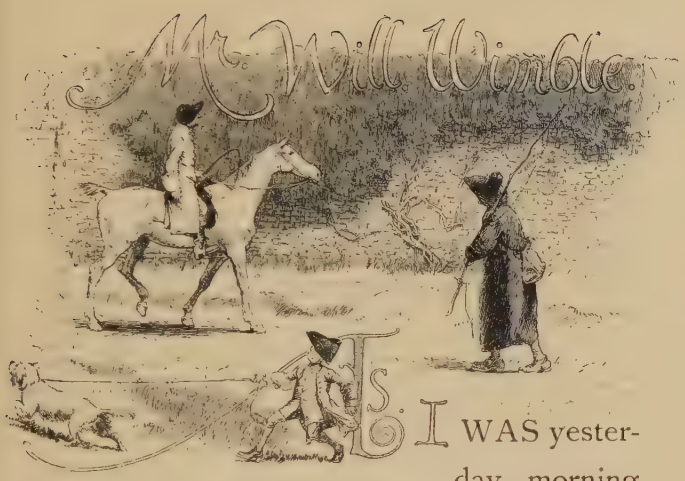
living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but

Sir Roger's Chaplain.

I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so

charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as with the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country-clergy would follow this example; and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.



IT WAS yesterday morning walking with Sir ROGER before his house, a country-fellow brought him a huge fish, which, he told him, Mr. *William Wimble* had caught that very morning; and that he presented it, with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a letter which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.

"*Sir* ROGER,

"I Desire you to accept of a jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the perch bite in the *Black River.* I observed with some concern, the last time I saw you upon the bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it; I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at *Eaton* with Sir *John's* eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely.

"I am,

"*SIR, your humble servant,*

"WILL WIMBLE."

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the gentleman who sent them; which I found

Sir Roger on the Bowling-green.

to be as follows. *Will Wimble* is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the *Wimbles*. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate,

he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed

Will Wimble in the Hunting-field.

in all the little handicrafts of an idle man: he makes a *Mayfly* to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natur'd officious fellow, and very much esteem'd upon account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good

Will Wimble with the Puppies.

correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip-root in his

pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. *Will* is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has weaved, or a setting-dog that he has *made* himself. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by enquiring as often as he meets them *how they wear!* These gentlemen-like manufactures and obliging little humours make *Will* the darling of the country.

Sir Roger was proceeding in the character of him, when we saw him make up to us with two or three hazel-twigs in his hand that he had cut in Sir Roger's woods, as he came through them, in his

way to the house. I was very much pleased to observe on one side the hearty and sincere welcome with which Sir

The Story of the Garters.

ROGER received him, and on the other, the secret joy which his guest discover'd at sight of the good old Knight. After the first salutes were over, *Will* desired Sir ROGER to lend him one of his servants

to carry a set of shuttle-cocks he had with him in a little box to a lady that lived about a mile off, to whom it seems he had promised such a present for above this half year. Sir Roger's back was no sooner turned but honest *Will* began to tell me of a large cock-pheasant that he had sprung in one of the neighbouring woods, with two or three other adventures of the same nature. Odd and uncommon characters are the game I looked for, and most delight in; for which reason I was as much pleased with the novelty of the person that talked to me, as he could be for his life with the springing of a pheasant, and therefore listen'd to him with more than ordinary attention.

In the midst of his discourse the bell rung to dinner, where the gentleman I have been speaking of had the pleasure of

seeing the huge jack, he had caught, served up for the first dish in a most

How the Jack was caught.

sumptuous manner. Upon our sitting down to it he gave us a long account how he had hooked it, played with it, foiled it,

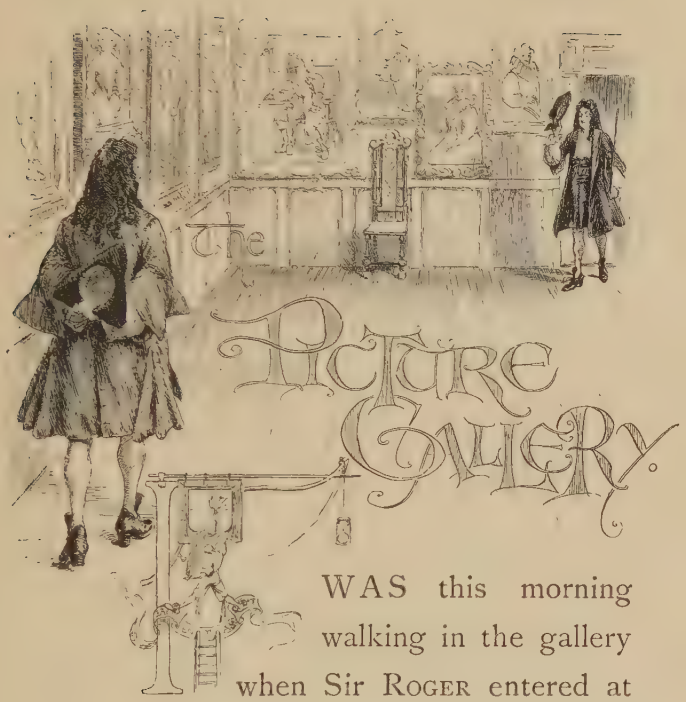
and at length drew it out upon the bank, with several other particulars that lasted all the first course. A dish of wild fowl that came afterwards furnished conversation for the rest of the dinner, which concluded with a late invention of *Will's* for improving the quail-pipe.

Upon withdrawing into my room after dinner, I was secretly touched with compassion towards the honest gentleman that had dined with us; and could not but consider with a great deal of concern, how so good an heart and such busy hands were wholly employed in trifles; that so much humanity should be so little beneficial to others, and so much industry so little advantageous to himself. The same temper of mind and application to affairs might have recommended him to the publick esteem, and have raised his

fortune in another station of life. What good to his country or himself might not a trader or merchant have done with such useful tho' ordinary qualifications?

Will Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family, who had rather see their children starve like gentlemen, than thrive in a trade or profession that is beneath their quality. This humour fills several parts of *Europe* with pride and beggary. It is the happiness of a trading nation, like ours, that the younger sons, tho' uncapable of any liberal art or profession, may be placed in such a way of life, as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their family: Accordingly we find several citizens that were launched into the world with narrow fortunes, rising by an honest industry to greater estates than those of their elder

brothers. It is not improbable but *Will* was formerly tried at divinity, law, or physick; and that finding his genius did not lie that way, his parents gave him up at length to his own inventions. But certainly, however improper he might have been for studies of a higher nature, he was perfectly well turned for the occupations of trade and commerce. As I think this is a point which cannot be too much inculcated, I shall desire my reader to compare what I have here written with what I have said in my twenty-first speculation.



WAS this morning walking in the gallery when Sir Roger entered at the end opposite to me, and advancing towards me, said he was glad to meet me among his relations the de Coverleys, and hoped I liked the conversation of so much good company, who were as silent

as myself. I knew he alluded to the pictures, and as he is a gentleman who does not a little value himself upon his ancient descent, I expected he would give me some account of them. We were now arrived at the upper-end of the gallery, when the Knight faced towards one of the pictures, and as we stood before it, he entered into the matter, after his blunt way of saying things, as they occur to his imagination, without regular introduction, or care to preserve the appearance of chain of thought.

"It is," said he, "worth while to consider the force of dress; and how the persons of one age differ from those of another, merely by that only. One may observe also, that the general fashion of one age has been followed by one particular set of people in another, and by

them preserved from one generation to another. Thus the vast jetting coat and small bonnet, which was the habit in *Harry* the seventh's time, is kept on in the yeomen of the guard; not without a good and politick view, because they look a foot taller, and a foot and an half broader: Besides that the cap leaves the face expanded, and consequently more terrible, and fitter to stand at the entrances of palaces.

"This predecessor of ours, you see, is dressed after this manner, and his cheeks would be no larger than mine, were he in a hat as I am. He was the last man that won a prize in the tilt-yard (which is now a common street before *Whitehall*). You see the broken lance that lies there by his right foot; he shiver'd that lance of his adversary all to pieces; and bearing him-

self, look you, Sir, in this manner, at the same time he came within the target of

Sir Roger's Ancestor at the Turnament.

the gentleman who rode against him, and taking him with incredible force before him on the pommel of his saddle, he in

that manner rid the turnament over, with an air that shewed he did it rather to perform the rule of the lists, than expose his enemy; however, it appeared he knew how to make use of a victory, and with a gentle trot he marched up to a gallery where their mistress sat (for they were rivals) and let him down with laudable courtesy and pardonable insolence. I don't know but it might be exactly where the coffee-house is now.

"You are to know this my ancestor was not only of a military genius, but fit also for the arts of peace, for he played on the bass-viol as well as any gentleman at court; you see where his viol hangs by his basket-hilt sword. The action at the tilt-yard you may be sure won the fair lady, who was a maid of honour, and the greatest beauty of her time; here she

stands the next picture. You see, Sir, my great-great-great-grandmother has on the new-fashion'd petticoat, except that the modern is gather'd at the waist; my grandmother appears as if she stood in a large drum, whereas the ladies now walk as if they were in a go-cart. For all this lady was bred at court, she became an excellent country-wife, she brought ten children, and when I shew you the library, you shall see in her own hand (allowing for the difference of the language) the best receipt now in *England* both for an hasty-pudding and a white-pot.

"If you please to fall back a little, because 'tis necessary to look at the three next pictures at one view; these are three sisters. She on the right hand, who is so very beautiful, died a maid; the next to her, still handsomer, had the same fate,

against her will; this homely thing in the middle had both their portions added to

"Knocked down two Deer-stealers in carrying her off"

her own, and was stolen by a neighbouring gentleman, a man of stratagem and

resolution, for he poisoned three mastiffs to come at her, and knocked down two deer-stealers in carrying her off. Misfortunes happen in all families: The theft of this romp and so much money, was no great matter to our estate. But the next heir that possessed it was this soft gentleman, whom you see there: Observe the small buttons, the little boots, the laces, the slashes about his clothes, and above all the posture he is drawn in (which to be sure was his own choosing); you see he sits with one hand on a desk writing and looking as it were another way, like an easy writer, or a sonneteer: He was one of those that had too much wit to know how to live in the world; he was a man of no justice, but great good manners; he ruined every body that had any thing to do with him, but never said a rude

thing in his life; the most indolent person in the world, he would sign a deed that

Sir Roger's Ancestor invents a new Mode of making Love

passed away half his estate with his gloves on, but would not put on his hat before a lady if it were to save his country. He

is said to be the first that made love by squeezing the hand. He left the estate with ten thousand pounds debt upon it; but, however, by all hands I have been informed that he was every way the finest gentleman in the world. That debt lay heavy on our house for one generation, but it was retrieved by a gift from that honest man you see there, a citizen of our name, but nothing at all akin to us. I know Sir ANDREW FREEPORT had said behind my back, that this man was descended from one of the ten children of the maid of honour I shewed you above; but it was never made out. We winked at the thing indeed, because money was wanting at that time."

Here I saw my friend a little embarrassed, and turned my face to the next portraiture.

Sir ROGER went on with his account of the gallery in the following manner. "This man (pointing to him I looked at) I take to be the honour of our house. Sir HUMPHREY DE COVERLEY; he was in his dealings as punctual as a tradesman and as generous as a gentleman. He would have thought himself as much undone by breaking his word, as if it were to be followed by bankruptcy. He served his country as knight of this shire to his dying day. He found it no easy matter to maintain an integrity in his words and actions, even in things that regarded the offices which were incumbent upon him, in the care of his own affairs and relations of life, and therefore dreaded (though he had great talents) to go into employments of state, where he must be exposed to the snares of ambition. Innocence of life and

great ability were the distinguishing parts of his character; the latter, he had often observed, had led to the destruction of the

former, and used frequently to lament that great and good had not the same signification. He was an excellent husbandman, but had resolved not to exceed such a degree of wealth; all above it he bestowed

in secret bounties many years after the sum he aimed at for his own use was attained. Yet he did not slacken his industry, but to a decent old age spent the life and fortune which was superfluous to himself, in the service of his friends and neighbours."

Here we were called to dinner, and Sir ROGER ended the discourse of this gentleman, by telling me, as we followed the servant, that this his ancestor was a brave man, and narrowly escaped being killed in the civil wars; "For," said he, "he was sent out of the field upon a private message, the day before the battle of *Worcester*." The whim of narrowly escaping by having been within a day of danger, with other matters above mentioned, mixed with good sense, left me at a loss whether I was more delighted with my friend's wisdom or simplicity.

I am always very well pleased with a country *Sunday*, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their

cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. *Sunday* clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the *Church-yard*, as a citizen does upon the *Change*, the whole parish-politicks being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir ROGER, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own

choosing: He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming

The Weekly Instruction in the Tunes of the Psalms.

to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in their responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer-book: and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master,

who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms ; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed

Sir Roger stands up to count the Congregation.

outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in

it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees any body else nodding, either wakes them himself,

or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old Knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased

with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces *Amen* three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when every body else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one *John Matthews* to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This *John Matthews* it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the Knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good

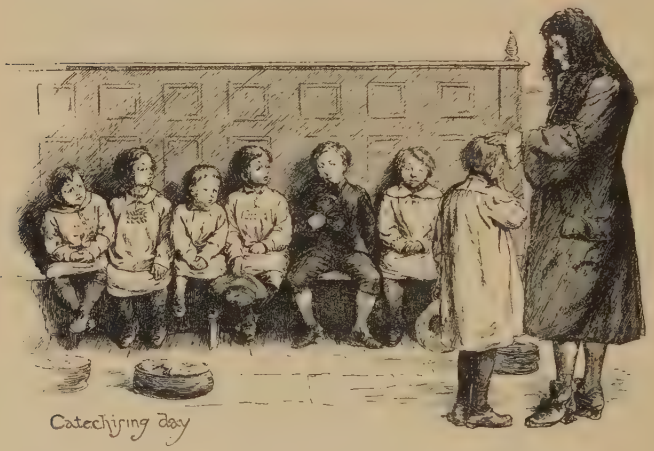
Sir Roger and his Tenants.

sense and worthiness of his character makes his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, no body presumes to stir till Sir ROGER is gone out of the church. The Knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then enquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising-day, when Sir ROGER has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir ROGER has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage

the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent,



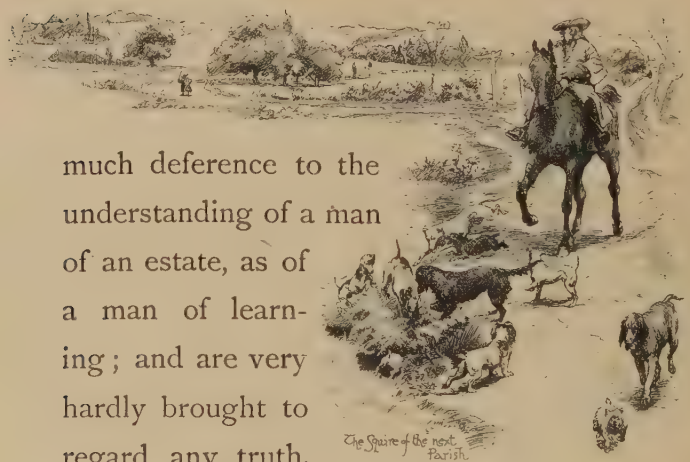
who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and conten-

tions that rise between the parson and the 'squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the 'squire, and the 'squire to be revenged on the parson never comes to church. The 'squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every *Sunday* in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the 'squire has not said his prayers either in publick or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to

be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.



In my first description of the company in which I pass most of my time, it may be remembered that I mentioned a great affliction which my friend Sir Roger had met with in his youth; which was no less than a disappointment in love. It happened this evening that we fell into a very pleasing

walk at a distance from his house: As soon as we came into it, "It is," quoth the good old man, looking round him with a smile, "very hard, that any part of my land should be settled upon one who has used me so ill as the perverse widow did; and yet I am sure I could not see a sprig of any bough of this whole walk of trees, but I should reflect upon her and her severity. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. You are to know this was the place wherein I used to muse upon her; and by that custom I can never come into it, but the same tender sentiments revive in my mind, as if I had actually walked with that beautiful creature under these shades. I have been fool enough to carve her name on the bark of several of these trees; so unhappy is

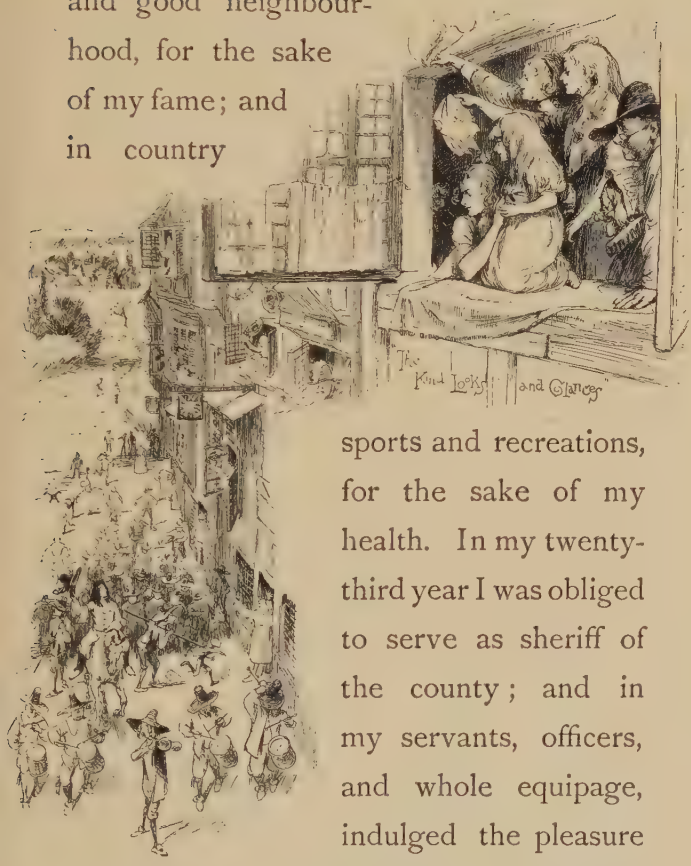
the condition of men in love, to attempt the removing of their passions by the methods which serve only to imprint it

deeper. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world."

Here followed a profound silence; and I was not displeased to observe my friend falling so naturally into a discourse, which I had ever before taken notice he industriously avoided. After a very long pause he entered upon an account of this great circumstance in his life, with an air which I thought raised my idea of him above what I had ever had before; and gave me the picture of that chearful mind of his, before it received that stroke which has ever since affected his words and actions. But he went on as follows:

"I came to my estate in my twenty-second year, and resolved to follow the steps of the most worthy of my ancestors who have inhabited this spot of earth before me, in all the methods of hospitality

and good neighbourhood, for the sake of my fame; and in country



sports and recreations, for the sake of my health. In my twenty-third year I was obliged to serve as sheriff of the county; and in my servants, officers, and whole equipage, indulged the pleasure of a young man (who did not think ill of his own person) in taking that public

occasion of shewing my figure and behaviour to advantage. You may easily imagine to yourself what appearance I made, who am pretty tall, rid well, and was very well dressed, at the head of a whole county, with musick before me, a feather in my hat, and my horse well bitted. I can assure you I was not a little pleased with the kind looks and glances I had from all the balconies and windows as I rode to the hall where the assizes were held. But when I came there, a beautiful creature in a widow's habit sat in court, to hear the event of a cause concerning her dower. This commanding creature (who was born for the destruction of all who behold her) put on such a resignation in her countenance, and bore the whispers of all around the court with such a pretty uneasiness, I

warrant you, and then recovered herself from one eye to another, till she was perfectly confused by meeting something so wistful in all she encountered, that at

last, with a murrain to her, she cast her bewitching eye upon me. I no sooner met it, but I bowed like a great surprised booby; and knowing her cause to be the first which came on, I cried, like a captivated calf as I was, 'Make way for

the defendant's witnesses.' This sudden partiality made all the county see the sheriff also was become a slave to the fine widow. During the time her cause was upon trial, she behaved herself, I warrant you, with such a deep attention to her business, took opportunities to have little billets handed to her counsel, then would be in such a pretty confusion, occasioned, you must know, by acting before so much company, that not only I but the whole court was prejudiced in her favour; and all that the next heir to her husband had to urge, was thought so groundless and frivolous, that when it came to her counsel to reply, there was not half so much said as every one besides in the court thought he could have urged to her advantage. You must understand, Sir, this perverse woman is one of those

unaccountable creatures, that secretly rejoice in the admiration of men, but indulge themselves in no farther consequences. Hence it is that she has ever had a train of admirers, and she removes from her slaves in town to those in the country, according to the seasons of the year. She is a reading lady, and far gone in the pleasures of friendship: She is always accompanied by a confident, who is witness to her daily protestations against our sex, and consequently a bar to her first steps towards love, upon the strength of her own maxims and declarations.

"However, I must needs say this accomplished mistress of mine has distinguished me above the rest, and has been known to declare Sir Roger de Coverley was the tamest and most humane of all the brutes in the country.

I was told she said so, by one who thought he rallied me; but upon the strength of this slender encouragement of being thought least detestable, I made new liveries, new-pair'd my coach horses, sent them all to town to be bitted and taught to throw their legs well, and move all together, before I pretended to cross the country, and wait upon her. As soon as I thought my retinue suitable to the character of my fortune and youth, I set out from hence to make my addresses. The particular skill of this lady has ever been to inflame your wishes, and yet command respect. To make her mistress of this art, she has a greater share of knowledge, wit, and good sense, than is usual even among men of merit. Then she is beautiful beyond the race of women. If you won't let her go on with a certain

artifice with her eyes, and the skill of beauty, she will arm herself with her real charms, and strike you with admiration instead of desire. It is certain that if you

were to behold the whole woman, there is that dignity in her aspect, that composure in her motion, that complacency in her manner, that if her form makes you hope, her merit makes you fear. But

then again, she is such a desperate scholar, that no country-gentleman can approach her without being a jest. As I was going to tell you, when I came to her house I was admitted to her presence with great civility; at the same time she placed herself to be first seen by me in such an attitude, as I think you call the posture of a picture, that she discovered new charms, and I at last came towards her with such an awe as made me speechless. This she no sooner observed but she made her advantage of it, and began a discourse to me concerning love and honour, as they both are followed by pretenders and the real votaries to them. When she discussed these points in a discourse, which I verily believe was as learned as the best philosopher in *Europe* could possibly make, she asked me whether she was so happy

"Has directed a Discourse to me which I do not understand."

as to fall in with my sentiments on these important particulars. Her confident sat by her, and upon my being in the last confusion and silence, this malicious aid of hers turning to her says, 'I am very glad to observe Sir ROGER pauses upon this subject, and seems resolved to deliver all his sentiments upon the matter when he

pleases to speak.' They both kept their countenances, and after I had sat half an hour meditating how to behave before such profound casuists, I rose up and took my leave. Chance has since that time thrown me very often in her way, and she as often has directed a discourse to me which I do not understand. This barbarity has kept me ever at a distance from the most beautiful object my eyes ever beheld. It is thus also she deals with all mankind, and you must make love to her, as you would conquer the sphinx, by posing her. But were she like other women, and that there were any talking to her, how constant must the pleasure of that man be, who could converse with the creature— But, after all, you may be sure her heart is fixed on some one or other; and yet I have been credibly inform'd;

but who can believe half that is said? After she had done speaking to me, she put her hand to her bosom and adjusted her tucker. Then she cast her eyes a little down, upon my beholding her too earnestly. They say she sings excellently; her voice in her ordinary speech has something in it inexpressibly sweet. You must know I dined with her at a publick table the day after I first saw her, and she helped me to some tansy in the eye of all the gentlemen in the country. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. I can assure you, Sir, were your to behold her, you would be in the same condition; for as her speech is musick, her form is angelick. But I find I grow irregular while I am talking of her; but indeed it would be stupidity to be unconcerned at such perfection. Oh

the excellent creature! she is as inimitable to all women, as she is inaccessible to all men."

I found my friend begin to rave, and insensibly led him towards the house, that we might be joined by some other company; and am convinced that the widow is the secret cause of all that inconsistency which appears in some parts of my friend's discourse; tho' he has so much command of himself as not directly to mention her, yet according to that of *Martial*, which one knows not how to render into *English*, *Dum tacet hanc loquitur*. I shall end this paper with that whole epigram, which represents with much humour my honest friend's condition.

Quicquid agit Rufus, nihil est, nisi Nævia Rufo,
Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur:
Cœnat, propinat, poscet, negat, annuit, una est
Nævia; si non sit Nævia, mutus erit.

Scriberet hesternâ patri cum luce salutem,
Nævia lux, inquit, Nævia numen, ave.

Epig. 69, l. 1.

Let *Rufus* weep, rejoice, stand, sit or walk,
Still he can nothing but of *Nævia* talk;
Let him eat, drink, ask questions, or dispute,
Still he must speak of *Nævia*, or be mute.
He writ to his father, ending with this line,
"I am, my lovely *Nævia*, ever thine."

"I am, my lovely Nævia, ever thine."

Those who have searched into human nature, observe that nothing so much shews the nobleness of the soul as that its felicity consists in action. Every man has such an active principle in him, that he will find out something to employ himself upon, in whatever place or state of life he is posted. I have heard of a gentleman who was under close confinement in the *Bastile* seven years; during which time he amused

himself in scattering a few small pins about his chamber, gathering them up again, and placing them in different figures on the arm of a great chair. He often told his friends afterwards, that unless he had found out this piece of exercise, he verily believed he should have lost his senses.

After what has been said, I need not inform my readers that Sir ROGER, with whose character I hope they are at present pretty well acquainted, had in his youth gone through the whole course of those rural diversions which the country abounds in; and which seem to be extremely well suited to that laborious industry a man may observe here in a far greater degree than in towns and cities. I have before hinted at some of my friend's exploits: He had in his youthful days taken forty

coveys of partridges in a season; and tired many a salmon with a line consisting but of a single hair. The constant thanks and good wishes of the neighbourhood always attended him, on account of his remarkable enmity towards foxes; having destroyed more of those vermin in one year, than it was thought the whole country could have produced. Indeed the Knight does not scruple to own among his most intimate friends, that in order to establish his reputation this way, he has secretly sent for great numbers of them out of other counties, which he used to turn loose about the country by night, that he might the better signalise himself in their destruction the next day. His hunting horses were the finest and best managed in all these parts: His tenants are still full of the praises of a grey stone-

horse that unhappily staked himself several years since, and was buried with great solemnity in the orchard.

Sir ROGER, being at present too old for fox-hunting, to keep himself in action, has disposed of his beagles and got a pack of *Stop-Hounds*. What these want in speed, he endeavours to make amends for by

the deepness of their mouths and the variety of their notes, which are suited in

such manner to each other, that the whole cry makes up a complete concert. He is so nice in this particular, that a gentleman

having made him a present of a very fine hound the other day, the Knight returned it by the servant with a great many expressions of civility; but desired him to tell his master, that the dog he had sent was indeed a most excellent *Bass*, but that at present he only wanted a *Counter-Tenor*. Could I believe my friend had ever read *Shakespeare*, I should certainly conclude he had taken the hint from *Theseus in the Midsummer Night's Dream.*

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan *kind,*
So flu'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew.
Crook-knee'd and dew-lap'd like Thessalian *bulls,*
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouths like bells,
Each under each: A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor chear'd with horn.

Sir ROGER is so keen at this sport, that he has been out almost every day since I came down; and upon the chaplain's

offering to lend me his easy pad, I was prevailed on yesterday morning to make one of the company. I was extremely pleased, as we rid along, to observe the general benevolence of all the neighbourhood towards my friend. The farmers'

sons thought themselves happy if they could open a gate for the good old Knight as he passed by; which he generally requited with a nod or a smile, and a kind of enquiry after their fathers and uncles.

After we had rid about a mile from home, we came upon a large heath, and the sportsmen began to beat. They had done so for some time, when, as I was at a little distance from the rest of the company, I saw a hare pop out from a small furze-brake almost under my horse's feet. I marked the way she took, which I endeavoured to make the company sensible of by extending my arms; but to no purpose, till Sir ROGER, who knows that none of my extraordinary motions are insignificant, rode up to me, and asked me *if puss was gone that way*? Upon my answering *Yes*, he immediately called in the dogs,

and put them upon the scent. As they were going off, I heard one of the country-fellows muttering to his companion, *That 'twas a wonder they had not lost all their*

sport, for want of the silent gentleman's crying Stole away.

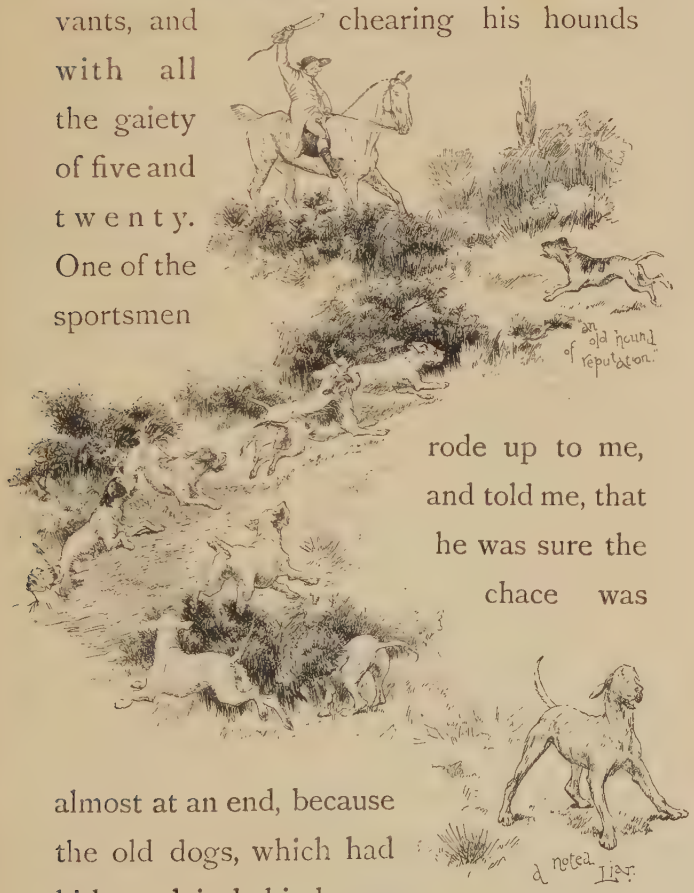
This, with my aversion to leaping hedges, made me withdraw to a rising ground, from whence I could have the pleasure of the whole chase, without the

fatigue of keeping in with the hounds. The hare immediately threw them above a mile behind her; but I was pleased to find, that instead of running straight forwards, or, in hunter's language, *Flying the country*, as I was afraid she might have done, she wheel'd about, and described a sort of circle round the hill where I had taken my station, in such manner as gave me a very distinct

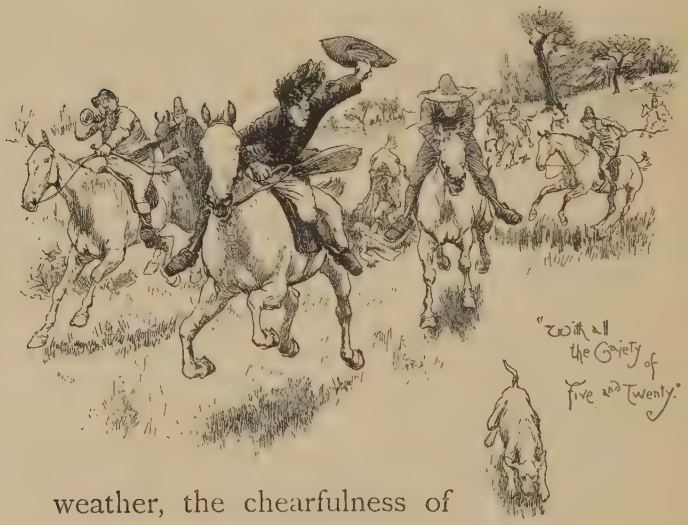
view of the sport. I could see her first pass by, and the dogs some time afterwards unravelling the whole track she had made, and following her thro' all her doubles. I was at the same time delighted in observing that deference which the rest of the pack paid to each particular hound, according to the character he had acquired amongst them: If they were at a fault, and an old hound of reputation opened but once, he was immediately followed by the whole cry; while a raw dog or one who was a noted *Liar*, might have yelped his heart out, without being taken notice of.

The hare now, after having squatted two or three times, and been put up again as often, came still nearer to the place where she was at first started. The dogs pursued her, and these were followed by the jolly Knight, who rode upon a white geld-

ing, encompassed by his tenants and servants, and chearing his hounds with all the gaiety of five and twenty. One of the sportsmen rode up to me, and told me, that he was sure the chace was almost at an end, because the old dogs, which had hitherto lain behind, now



headed the pack. The fellow was in the right. Our hare took a large field just under us, followed by the full cry *in view*. I must confess the brightness of the



weather, the chearfulness of every thing around me, the *chiding* of the hounds, which was returned upon us in a double echo from two neighbouring hills, with the hollowing of the sportsmen, and the sounding of the horn, lifted my

spirits into a most lively pleasure, which I freely indulged because I was sure it was *innocent*. If I was under any concern it was on the account of the poor hare, that was now quite spent and almost within the reach of her enemies; when the huntsman getting forward threw down his pole before the dogs. They were now within eight yards of that game which they had been pursuing for almost as many hours; yet on the signal before-mentioned they all made a sudden stand, and tho' they continued opening as much as before, durst not once attempt to pass beyond the pole. At the same time Sir ROGER rode forward, and alighting, took up the hare in his arms; which he soon delivered up to one of his servants, with an order, if she could be kept alive, to let her go in his great orchard; where it seems he has

several of these prisoners of war, who live together in a very comfortable captivity. I was highly pleased to see the discipline of the pack, and the good-nature of the Knight, who could not find in his heart to murder a creature that had given him so much diversion.

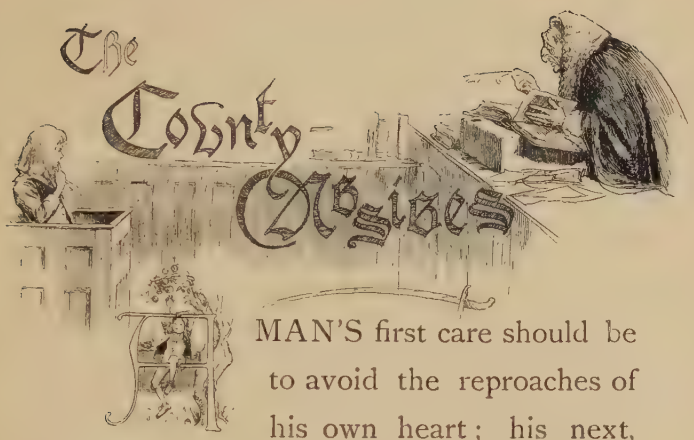
As we were returning home, I remembered that Monsieur *Paschal*, in his most excellent discourse on *the misery of man*, tells us, that *all our endeavours after greatness proceed from nothing but a desire of being surrounded by a multitude of persons and affairs that may hinder us from looking into ourselves, which is a view we cannot bear.* He afterwards goes on to shew that our love of sports comes from the same reason, and is particularly severe upon hunting. *What*, says he, *unless it be to drown thought, can make*

men throw away so much time and pains upon a silly animal, which they might buy cheaper in the market? The foregoing reflection is certainly just, when a man suffers his whole mind to be drawn into his sports, and altogether loses himself in the woods; but does not affect those who propose a far more laudable end for this exercise, I mean, *The preservation of health, and keeping all the organs of the soul in a condition to execute her orders.* Had that incomparable person, whom I last quoted, been a little more indulgent to himself in this point, the world might probably have enjoyed him much longer; whereas thro' too great an application to his studies in his youth, he contracted that ill habit of body, which, after a tedious sickness, carried him off in the fortieth year of his age; and the whole history we

have of his life till that time, is but one continued account of the behaviour of a noble soul struggling under innumerable pains and distempers.

For my own part I intend to hunt twice a week during my stay with Sir Roger; and shall prescribe the moderate use of this exercise to all my country friends as the best kind of physick for mending a bad constitution, and preserving a good one. I cannot do this better, than in the following lines out of Mr. *Dryden.*

The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade.
By chace our long-liv'd fathers earn'd their food;
Toil strung the nerves, and purify'd the blood;
But we their sons, a pamper'd race of men,
Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.
Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
Than fee the Doctor for a nauseous draught.
The wise for cure on exercise depend;
God never made his work for man to mend.



MAN'S first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world: If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applauses of the publick: A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict which he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

My worthy friend Sir Roger is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute

Sir Roger takes us to the Assizes.

for his universal benevolence to mankind, in the returns of affection and good-will, which are paid him by every one that lives within his Neighbourhood. I lately met with two or three odd instances of that general respect which is shewn to the

good old Knight. He would needs carry *Will Wimble* and myself with him to the county-assizes. As we were upon the road, *Will Wimble* join'd a couple of plain men who rid before us, and conversed

The two plain Men who rid before us.

with them for some time; during which my friend Sir ROGER acquainted me with their characters.

The first of them, says he, that has a spaniel by his side, is a yeoman of about

an hundred pounds a year, an honest man: He is just within the game-act, and qualified to kill an hare or a pheasant:

An honest Yeoman.

He knocks down a dinner with his gun twice or thrice a week; and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have

not so good an estate as himself. He would be a good neighbour if he did not destroy so many partridges: In short, he

Tom Touchy.

is a very sensible man; shoots flying; and has been several times foreman of the petty-jury.

The other that rides along with him is *Tom Touchy*, a fellow famous for *taking*

the law of every body. There is not one in the town where he lives that he has not sued at a quarter sessions. The rogue had once the impudence to go to law with the *widow*. His head is full of costs, damages, and ejectments: He plagued a couple of honest gentlemen so long for a trespass in breaking one of his hedges, till he was forced to sell the ground it enclosed to defray the charges of the prosecution: His father left him fourscore pounds a year; but he has *cast* and been cast so often, that he is not now worth thirty. I suppose he is going upon the old business of the willow-tree.

As Sir ROGER was giving me this account of *Tom Touchy*, *Will Wimble* and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir ROGER, *Will* told him that

Mr. *Touchy* and he must appeal to him

Will Wimble.

upon a dispute that arose between them. *Will*, it seems, had been giving his fellow-

traveller an account of his angling one day in such a hole; when *Tom Touchy*, instead of hearing out his story, told him that Mr. Such-a-one, if he pleased, might *take the law of him* for fishing in that part of the river. My friend Sir Roger heard them both, upon a round trot; and after having paused some time told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, *that much might be said on both sides.* They were neither of them dissatisfied with the Knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it: Upon which we made the best of our way to the assizes.

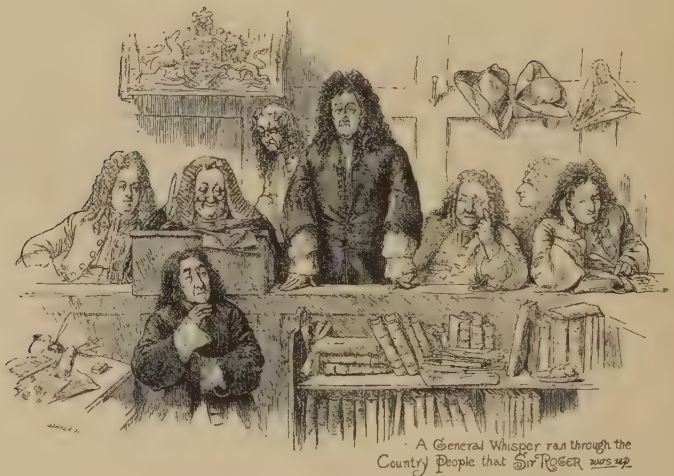
The court was sat before Sir Roger came; but notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon the bench, they made room for the old Knight at the head of them; who for his reputation in

the country took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear, *That he was glad his lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit.* I was listening to the pro-

The Widow consults her Lawyer ancnt Tom Touchy.

ceeding of the court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance and solemnity which so properly accompanies such a publick administration of our laws; when, after about an

hour's sitting, I observed to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him, till I found he had



A General Whisper ran through the Country People that Sir Roger was up.

acquitted himself of two or three sentences with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among

the country people that Sir ROGER *was up*. The speech he made was so little to the purpose, that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it; and I believe was not so much designed by the Knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye, and keep up his credit in the country.

I was highly delighted, when the court rose, to see the gentlemen of the country gathering about my old friend, and striving who should compliment him most; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge.

In our return home we met with a very odd accident; which I cannot forbear relating, because it shews how desirous all who know Sir ROGER are of giving him

marks of their esteem. When we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves and our horses. The man of the house

"We stopped at a little Inn to rest ourselves and our Horses."

had it seems been formerly a servant in the Knight's family; and to do honour to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a sign-post before the door; so that *the*

Knight's head had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew any thing of the matter. As soon as Sir ROGER was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and good-will, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added with a more decisive look, That it was too great an honour for any man under a duke; but told him at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge of it. Accordingly they got a painter by the Knight's directions to add a pair of whiskers to the face, and by a little aggravation of the features to change it into the *Saracen's-Head*. I should not have known this story had not the

Inspecting his Honour's Head with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it.

inn-keeper, upon Sir ROGER'S alighting, told him in my hearing, That his honour's head was brought back last night with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it. Upon this my friend with his usual chearfulness related the particulars above-mentioned, and ordered the head to be brought into the room. I could not forbear discovering greater expressions of mirth than ordinary upon the appearance

of this monstrous face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I

Much 'might' be said on both sides

could still discover a distant resemblance of my old friend. Sir Roger upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if

I thought it possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence; but upon the Knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a *Saracen*, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, *That much might be said on both sides.*

These several adventures, with the Knight's behaviour in them, gave me as pleasant a day as ever I met with in any of my travels.

The Spectator's Return to Town.

Having notified to my good friend Sir Roger that I should set out for *London* the next day, his horses were ready at the appointed hour in the evening; and attended by one of his grooms, I arrived at the country town at twilight, in order to be ready for the stage-coach the day following. As soon as we arrived at the inn, the servant, who waited upon me, enquir'd of the chamberlain in my hearing what company he had

for the coach? The fellow answered, Mrs. *Betty Arable*, the great fortune, and the widow her mother; a recruiting officer

(who took a place because they were to go); young 'Squire *Quickset* her cousin (that her mother wished her to be married to); *Ephraim* the Quaker, her guardian; and a gentleman that had studied himself

dumb from Sir Roger de Coverley's. I observed by what he said of myself, that according to his office he dealt much in intelligence; and doubted not but there was some foundation for his reports for the rest of the company, as well as for the whimsical account he gave of me. The next morning at day-break we were all called; and I, who knew my own natural shyness, and endeavour to be as little liable to be disputed with as possible, dressed immediately, that I might make no one wait. The first preparation for our setting-out was, that the captain's half-pike was placed near the coachman, and a drum behind the coach. In the mean time the drummer, the captain's equipage, was very loud, that none of the captain's things should be placed so as to be spoiled; upon which his cloke-bag was

fixed in the seat of the coach: And the captain himself, according to a frequent, tho' invidious behaviour of military men,

Our Setting-out.

ordered his man to look sharp, that none but one of the ladies should have the place he had taken fronting to the coach-box.

We were in some little time fixed in

our seats, and sat with that dislike which people not too good-natured usually conceive of each other at first sight. The coach jumbled us insensibly into some sort of familiarity; and we had not moved above two miles, when the widow asked the captain what success he had in his recruiting? The officer, with a frankness he believed very graceful, told her, "That indeed he had but very little luck, and had suffered much by desertion, therefore should be glad to end his warfare in the service of her or her fair daughter. In a word," continued he, "I am a soldier, and to be plain is my character: You see me, Madam, young, sound, and impudent; take me yourself, widow, or give me to her, I will be wholly at your disposal. I am a soldier of fortune, ha!" This was followed by a vain laugh of his own, and a deep silence

of all the rest of the company. I had nothing left for it but to fall fast asleep,

"You see Me, Madam, young, sound, and Impudent."

which I did with all speed. "Come," said he, "resolve upon it, we will make a wedding at the next town: We will wake

this pleasant companion who has fallen asleep, to be the brideman" (and giving the quaker a clap on the knee) he concluded "This sly saint, who I'll warrant, understands what's what as well as you or I, widow, shall give the bride as father." The quaker, who happened to be a man of smartness, answered, "Friend, I take it in good part that thou hast given me the authority of a father over this comely and virtuous child; and I must assure thee, that if I have the giving her, I shall not bestow her on thee. Thy mirth, friend, savoureth of folly: Thou art a person of a light mind; thy drum is a type of thee, it soundeth because it is empty. Verily, it is not from thy fulness, but thy emptiness that thou hast spoken this day. Friend, friend, we have hired this coach in partnership with thee, to

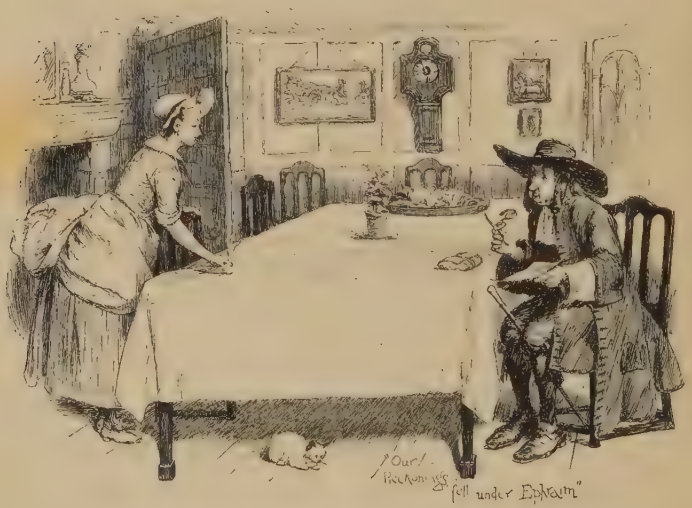
carry us to the great city; we cannot go any other way. This worthy mother must hear thee if thou wilt needs utter thy follies; we cannot help it, friend, I say: If thou wilt, we must hear thee; but if thou wert a man of understanding, thou wouldst not take advantage of thy courageous countenance to abash us children of peace. Thou art, thou sayest, a soldier; give quarter to us, who cannot resist thee. Why didst thou fleer at our friend, who feigned himself asleep? he said nothing; but how dost thou know what he containeth? If thou speakest improper things in the hearing of this virtuous young virgin, consider it as an outrage against a distressed person that cannot get from thee: To speak indiscreetly what we are obliged to hear, by being hasped up with thee in this publick

vehicle, is in some degree assaulting on the high road."

Here *Ephraim* paused, and the captain with a happy and uncommon impudence (which can be convicted and support itself at the same time) cries, "Faith, friend, I thank thee; I should have been a little impertinent if thou hadst not reprimanded me. Come, thou art, I see, a smoky old fellow, and I'll be very orderly the ensuing part of my journey. I was going to give myself airs, but, ladies, I beg pardon."

The captain was so little out of humour, and our company was so far from being soured by this little ruffle, that *Ephraim* and he took a particular delight in being agreeable to each other for the future; and assumed their different provinces in the conduct of the company. Our reckon-

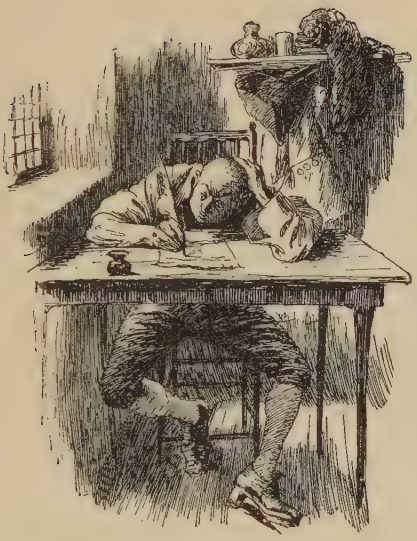
ings, apartments, and accommodation, fell under *Ephraim*; and the captain looked to all disputes upon the road, as the good behaviour of our coachman, and the right



we had of taking place as going to *London* of all vehicles coming from thence. The occurrences we met with were ordinary, and very little happened which could entertain by the relation of them: But

when I consider'd the company we were in, I took it for no small good-fortune that the whole journey was not spent in impertinences, which to the one part of us might be an entertainment, to the other a suffering. What therefore *Ephraim* said when we were almost arriv'd at *London* had to me an air not only of good understanding but good breeding. Upon the young lady's expressing her satisfaction in the journey, and declaring how delightful it had been to her, *Ephraim* delivered himself as follows : " There is no ordinary part of human life which expresseth so much a good mind, and a right inward man, as his behaviour upon meeting with strangers, especially such as may seem the most unsuitable companions to him : Such a man, when he falleth in the way with persons of simplicity and innocence, how-

ever knowing he may be in the ways of men, will not vaunt himself thereof; but will the rather hide his superiority to them, that he may not be painful unto them. My good friend (continued he, turning to the officer), thee and I are to part by and by, and peradventure we may never meet again: But be advised by a plain man: modes and apparel are but trifles to the real man, therefore do not think such a man as thyself terrible for thy garb, nor such a one as me contemptible for mine. When two such as thee and I meet, with affections as we ought to have towards each other, thou shouldst rejoice to see my peaceable demeanour, and I should be glad to see thy strength and ability to protect me in it."



"The Spectator in Town."

R R
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